



**CHILDREN AND ADULTS
SOCIAL CARE
WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

2020 – 2023

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Introduction

Background

Ealing Council's Corporate Plan¹ acknowledges the importance of the workforce in achieving our objective of securing public services to ensure the safety of the children and families and adults who require care and support. Both our Adults and Children's Services visions are aligned with the council's long-term priority to make Ealing an even better place to live, work and visit.

Our Adult Services vision is 'helping residents to live better lives'

Our Children's Services vision is to 'create a great place for every child and young person to grow up'.

This Workforce Strategy for Children and Adults provides a framework for developing and growing the capability and capacity of our social care workforce. We aspire to have a stable, well qualified workforce, which is managed effectively, receiving regular case and reflective supervision, with clear career pathways and high levels of job satisfaction.

Our strategy sits within the national context of a period of education and training and workforce reform. The Government continues to invest in new routes into social work (such as the degree apprenticeship) and implement programmes to drive improvement across the profession. Indeed, Health Check survey responses^{2,3} demonstrated that the introduction of new training and development programmes and implementation of new working practices were viewed as positive achievements. Nonetheless, there is a call for greater investment in development of the wider workforce. Consequently, our local strategy applies to social workers and other roles within the social care sector including staff who provide non-statutory support, such as family support workers. (See Appendix I for a summary of our current workforce)

Over the past few years, we have created strength-based learning and development programmes, which include new ways of working to ensure our practice can meet the growing demand for services in financially challenging times. These ways of working have now been implemented across both services and have become our practice models: Brighter Futures⁴ and Better lives⁵. Both are set within a context of operating in a demand-led environment in which there is a growing requirement for the services provided, whilst enduring increasing pressure on staffing levels.

¹ Ealing Council's corporate plan (2018-22)

https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201033/council_and_local_decisions/300/council_plan

² Adult Social Work Health Check Survey 2018 - Report of Findings

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/workforce%20-%20Adult%20Social%20Work%20Health%20Check%20Survey%202018%20-%20Report%20of%20Findings.pdf>

³ Children's Social Work Health Check Survey 2018 - Report of Findings

<https://local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/workforce%20-%20social%20workers%20-%20Children%E2%80%99s%20Social%20Work%20Health%20Check%20Survey%202018%20-%20Report%20of%20Findings%2C%20November%202018.pdf>

⁴ Ealing Brighter Futures programme <https://www.ealingsocialcare.jobs/childrens-services/>

⁵ Ealing Better Lives transformation programme <https://www.ealingsocialcare.jobs/adults-services/>

Coronavirus: Following government advice, during the COVID-19 pandemic, to keep staff healthy and safe whilst continuing to provide vital help, support and protection of children, families and vulnerable adults, we have introduced changes to our core and statutory work: Staff, not part of the duty teams, are working from home and attend 'virtual' staff meetings and supervision; New procedures are in place for ensuring visits are safe and carried out virtually where possible; A combined Adults and Children's placements team has been set up; And all in-house training course have been moved to on-line delivery.

Workforce planning

Effective workforce planning is one of the eight employer standards for the support of social workers⁶ and includes undertaking an assessment of current and future need. An Furthermore, Standard 3.6 of Social Work England's Qualifying Education and Training Standards 2020 states that education and training providers must "ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity." Analysis of the regional labour market reviewed by the West London Social Work Teaching Partnership⁷ highlighted emerging needs and anticipated gaps between the supply and demand of social workers in both services. The workforce analysis helped identify historical regional trends and issues of common concern with respect to retaining and recruiting social workers, particularly:

- A significant proportion of workers approaching retirement age
- Short job tenure and elevated turnover
- Increasing agency worker rates
- Shortfall in numbers of students graduating from university

Ealing, like many other London authorities, has a relatively young children's social worker workforce with a short tenure that could impact on practice standards and service delivery if development and retention of workers is not maintained. Nonetheless, Ealing compares favourably with the London-wide social worker workforce statistics, though our historical workforce data show that agency workers are consistently being relied upon to fill vacancies. Workforce planning plays a key role in being proactive, and planning tailored recruitment/retention initiatives, through anticipating future supply and demand of workers. We will therefore examine our workforce data annually to identify emerging trends.

Approximately one-third of our adult services workforce are social workers, who have a shorter job tenure and higher turnover compared to the rest of the workforce. Furthermore, there is a higher representation of agency workers covering social worker vacancies to meet shortfalls in supply. These findings are in-line with the regional picture, which reflects persistent recruitment and retention challenges for the profession in adult services too. Consequently, our workforce strategy is concentrated on the social worker workforce, though its scope extends to the whole workforce and emphasis will be modified on the emergence of any further workforce intelligence accordingly: presently we are looking at creating new non- professionally regulated roles in adult services.

Aims

The following strategy for growing and sustaining the social work and social care workforce in Ealing sets out how strengthening the quality of social work and social care education and training can play a key role in:

⁶The Standards for employers of social workers in England

<https://www.local.gov.uk/standards-employers-social-workers-england-0>

⁷West London Social Work teaching Partnership <http://www.socialworkteachingpartnership.co.uk/>

- Alleviating recruitment and retention difficulties
- Providing the right learning environments for excellent practice and for innovation and best practice to flourish
- Providing a pathway for the workforce on how to progress in their career in the council
- Helping the workforce to feel valued and treated with equity in all aspects of their work

Nb. The above aims also align with local authority health check survey responses, whereby areas such as recruitment & retention were reported as requiring improvement.

Priorities

In order to achieve the above and realise our vision, this strategy is centred around four key priorities:

1. Recruitment & retention of social workers and social care workers
2. Continuing professional development and career progression
3. Maintaining a focus on Equality and Diversity
4. Developing and Sustaining Partnerships

Monitoring & Evaluation

It is acknowledged that it will take time to implement change and develop the skills, knowledge, and expertise. We will therefore produce an annual action plan detailing tasks for implementation across each priority area and the associated lead responsibility. (See Appendix II for Action plan for Year 1) Priorities will be reviewed by the Head of Training and Development and the Principal Social Workers for Children's and Adults' services in consultation with the Senior Leadership teams. The plan will continue to be a regular item on our monthly consultants' team meeting agenda and will be reviewed on an annual basis. Each action will be given a RAG rating to help monitor progress and identify concerns. Additional resources will be allocated depending on an assessment of the volume of work required and the impact on services.

Our Training & Development Service (which sits across Children's & Adults Services) has fostered close links with the council's Human Resources department through working together in developing the new ways of working. This collaboration will continue to be important in tackling the challenges of recruiting and retaining workers, responding to trends in workforce data (such as staff turnover) and developing career pathways and training and development activities.

Data (quantitative and qualitative) will be collected where possible to help evaluate success of specific projects or initiatives. Examples of potential performance measures include: the number of statutory placements provided for university social work students; the proportion of final year students on placement recruited as newly qualified social workers onto the Assessed & Supported Year in Employment; attrition rate of Newly Qualified Social Workers who leave after the ASYE programme.

Priority 1: Recruitment & retention of social workers and social care workers

As highlighted in the introduction to this strategy, the recruitment & retention of social workers and social care workers remains a key challenge across both services and is critical to the organisation to maintain efficient services for our families and adults who require our care and support. The areas detailed below outline various projects and work that we are and will continue to work on to meet this priority.

- **Online presence:** We aim to establish a rolling recruitment programme for experienced Social Workers and are looking at ways to make the information contained in our recruitment microsite more attractive. The development of an online Social Work Academy will help us promote the training and continuous professional development opportunities on offer. We will also continue our work with both ‘Proud to care’⁸ in adults services and ‘social work together’ in children’s services (national recruitment portals) which advertise the range of jobs and career progression routes available, in order to enhance our supply of social workers and social care workers.
- **ASYE programme:** We run a successful ASYE programme which has been in place since 2012. We collaborate with our West London neighbouring boroughs to provide induction training programmes for both adults’ and children’s newly qualified workers. This programme gives newly qualified social workers extra support as they enter the profession. In 2019, we developed a 2nd year to this programme to further embed practice and aid retention. It incorporates four workshops on research relevant to social work and three professional development meetings with the social worker and their manager. The attrition of newly qualified social workers from year 1 to year 2 will be compared with the previous year to assess impact of the extended programme on job tenure.
- **Student placements:** We provide over 30 statutory placement opportunities for students each academic year via our partnerships with Universities. We match students to an appropriate placement and aim to place students in teams where we traditionally have vacancies, and ring-fence NQSW posts in Children’s Services for final year students on placement, to facilitate NQSW employment/recruitment rates. Final Year students on placement in Ealing are also supported to apply for a social work post as part of a targeted recruitment approach.
- **“Grow our own” recruitment programmes (incl. apprenticeships):** We bid for funding to support student social workers on fast track routes to qualification, such as Step Up and Think Ahead: We have over seven years’ experience supporting Step Up students and are in our 2nd year of supporting the Think Ahead Programme in Mental Health.

In March 2020, Ealing launched the three-year degree Apprenticeship in Social Work for non-social work qualified staff. Apprentices who successfully complete their programmes are expected to be well placed to apply for qualified social worker roles within Ealing. We are

⁸ Proud to Care, London <https://www.proudtocarenorthlondon.org.uk/>

currently supporting five family support workers to achieve this qualification in Children's Services and have recruited an additional four workers (including two workers from Adults Services) to the next cohort, due to start in March 2021. Our long-term aim is to not only offer places on the apprenticeship programme to our workforce as a career progression incentive, but also to invite members of our community from under-represented groups to apply, as part of our ambition to be an employer of choice for our residents.

- **Agency workers:** Agency staff are an effective means of developing a flexible workforce, for example to cover absences on a short-term basis. Agency workers are also being increasingly employed to fill longer-term vacancies. We understand that agency usage will persist in the context of staff shortages and will review the adherence to the separate memorandums of understanding between London Boroughs on children and adult agency worker pay caps on an annual basis. This will ensure competition between boroughs for agency social workers is reduced. We will also encourage the conversion of children and adult agency social workers to permanent employees to develop a more stable workforce.
- **Recruitment to shortage occupations/roles:**

Occupational Therapists (OTs) work with people to overcome difficulties and gain independence with the aim of decreasing dependency on services. OTs make a significant contribution to social care services, dealing with a high proportion of local authority referrals, despite only making up a small proportion of the workforce. Nonetheless, London has experienced high vacancy rates for occupational therapists who continue to be in high demand⁹.

The OT service is undergoing a review to look at different ways to deliver and improve practice and is in scope for being part of the council's digital future Ealing project in 2021.

Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs) have been approved by a local social services authority to carry out certain duties under the Mental Health Act. Social workers, mental health and learning disabilities nurses, occupational therapists and practitioner psychologists, registered with their respective regulator, may train to become AMHPs. We are committed to recruit and retain a high-quality AMHP workforce in accordance with the National Workforce Plan for AMHPs¹⁰.

Ealing has a track record in working in partnership with other organisations to facilitate training opportunities for the workforce: We have partnered with Bournemouth University to support our staff on a postgraduate diploma in Advanced Mental Health; we collaborate with the London Borough of Hounslow to provide three legal updates per year, to give AMHPs the opportunity to update their legal knowledge and skills; and we re-warrant qualified AMHPs after five years to maintain standards and enable staff to continuing practising in this role. We also aim to better utilize experienced AMHPs to support the next generation of trainees.

The Approved Mental Capacity Professional (AMCP) is a new specialist role that will build on and eventually replace the existing Best Interests Assessor role. The AMCP role is due to be introduced as part of the government's measures to replace the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and is most likely to be carried out by qualified social workers. Ealing will respond

⁹ An Investigation into the Occupational Therapy Workforce in London , Dec 2016

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/files/investigation-occupational-therapy-workforce-londonpdf>

¹⁰ National Workforce Plan for Approved Mental Health Professionals, Oct 2019

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843539/AMHP_Workforce_Plan_Oct19_3_.pdf

accordingly to government advice and implementation which is expected to include the creation of a new 'Lead AMCP' post and a training offer across every team.

- **New opportunities:** In children's services, we have several new opportunities:
 - 20 practitioners will be enrolled on the DfE, Child Sexual Abuse Leaders programme
 - We will continue to train and develop staff on the reducing parental conflict programme
 - And will be starting a new programme recruiting a team of Social workers to be based in Ealing Schools (SWiSS)

- **Practice Models:** The Brighter Futures (BF) Programme in Children's and the Better Lives (BL) Programme in Adults are embedded in the ways we work with children, young people and adults. These innovative ways of working will be continually reviewed and updated according to the needs of the service.

- **Mosaic:** As a result of our Ofsted ILAS inspection in November 2019 and our continued challenges with the implementation of the Mosaic client record system in Children's Services, we have embarked on a project to improve the reporting and user experience of Mosaic. We have a large improvement project and are working with Better Gov to achieve the required changes, which will aim to provide better information for our Children and families. We have developed a training and development programme to improve understanding of Mosaic for all social care staff in Children's Services and simultaneously will be working on the quality of our data. We will also aim to implement group working in Mosaic as part of the project. Our Audit procedure will monitor and assess effectiveness.

Priority 2. Career Progression and Continuing Professional Development

We are committed to support our workforce to grow their careers by developing their skill sets to bring additional value to themselves and to the organisation. Progress means happier employees in the long term - If variety is not present in a career, boredom and career fatigue sets in and employees become disengaged. A clear career progression framework will help Ealing both attract and retain workers and thus provide consistency for our families and adults requiring care and support.

The work of social care is undertaken with a variety of client groups, so in order to develop resilient practitioners and equip them to work with these service users, we offer a range of training courses and development opportunities (outlined below) which are publicised via “Ealing CPD Online” and the new intranet site for the Council. (See Appendix III for a list of the principles underpinning the training and development programme)

- **Career pathways:** Children’s Services have implemented a Social Worker Career Grade Scheme (See Appendix IV), which enables newly qualified social workers to plan their career through to becoming a Senior Social Worker. Progression is monitored through the Professional Competency Framework (PCF) tool and relevant Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) are used in both supervision and the Council’s Appraisal programme and are used to measure competence at a twice-yearly career progression panel.

Adults’ services social workers’ career progression is based on the PCF and KSS. The move from Scale 8 to 9 is automatic on successful completion of the ASYE, but progression to Scale 10 is assessed such that social workers need to provide the evidence required by the PCF. By further developing the career progression scheme in adult services, we can give experienced social workers a clear direction and supported development to progress their careers. The new career progression scheme will map out clearly what staff should expect from us, as an employer at all stages of their career.

- **Research in Practice:** In order to improve the levels of research literacy amongst our workforce, we have subscribed to Research in Practice, giving our staff access to research and policy articles, case law and legal updates, in addition to webinars, podcasts and other on-line events. This resource is being shared with practitioners and in-house multi-agency partners, through newly appointed Research Champions, responsible for improving access, dissemination and use of research in practice across Children’s Services. Research in practice also delivers specialist support to social workers to prepare and plan in accordance with the CPD registration requirements as outlined by Social Work England.
- **Leadership and Management Development:** We will continue to develop leadership skills across the organisation. We have a comprehensive programme of training on the West London Alliance for children’s services managers, a corporate induction and leadership apprentice programme for all managers and have developed a programme of supervision and leadership for Adults’ services. These programmes aim to support leaders and managers with regards to managing their teams

(managing people) and developing professionally and have a focus on good quality supervision and managing organisational change. Additionally, we have developed an audit webinar to ensure fair and consistent audit practice for our Leaders.

- **Coaching:** We provide a coaching offer to both Adults' and Children's Services staff. We have a small team of qualified coaches who are offering individual coaching sessions to deputy and team managers, two of these coaches will also be offering team coaching. We are aiming to expand this offer for other staff across the workforce.
- **Team and Deputy Team Managers' programme:** Since our focus is on organic growth, we have developed a 'Grow Your Own' programme for our Team Managers of the future. We will continue to embed this programme to ensure that new and existing deputy managers (and Senior Social Workers in adult services) are provided with a programme of coaching, training, and feedback sessions to fully develop leadership skills, enhance practice, and develop their careers. Furthermore, as part of our improvement journey in Children's Services we recently developed a bespoke management development programme for our Multi Agency Support teams, combining both leadership and practice skills to upskill managers and deputies. We will be monitoring effectiveness of this programme via a series of audits starting in September 2020.
- **Practice Educators:** We provide opportunities for staff to gain the Practice Educator qualification by offering places on the PEP 1 & PEP 2 programmes delivered by Brunel University, Royal Holloway and the University of West London. We also provide refreshers courses for established Practice Educators. These opportunities form part of our career progression scheme and are helping us to develop a service-wide learning culture from newly qualified social worker through to leadership roles.
- **Principal Social Workers:** The Principal Social Worker (PSW) role is established in both Children's and Adults Services. The role provides the means to ensure effective professional development is available for social workers, at all stages of their career. PSWs work with the Training and Development Team to embed the Knowledge and Skills Statements/post-qualifying standards and advocate for a career pathway that shapes current and future practice quality. They also have a responsibility for ensuring that Newly Qualified Social Workers have access to the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and oversee the quality of support and assessment in line with national requirements. PSW's actively promote and support the development of the practice leadership function of social workers, in addition to identifying and developing emerging talent.

Although managers are responsible for developing the staff they manage, individuals also have a responsibility to identify their developmental needs, manage their own learning, and keep their skills and knowledge up to date. The needs of individual staff are best identified during supervision sessions and at performance management meetings with line managers. In addition, there are organisational needs which will be identified by the Senior Management Teams across both services. Staff can also use the appraisal system to consolidate and review what development they need for the coming year. Training & development needs identified by Directors, Service Managers, Team Managers and Principal Social Workers are captured at senior managers' meetings which the Head of Training and Development attends.

Periodically a training needs analysis is carried out utilising a survey-based approach and this is sent separately to Children via the West London Alliance and direct to adults' services employees. The responses help determine which programmes will be commissioned in-house and also identifies the need for other training and learning activities. We will be flexible in design, enabling commissioning at short notice as needs arise.

Priority 3. Maintaining a Focus on Equality and Diversity

Ealing aims to develop, maintain and support a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion for our workforce. We seek to sustain a working, learning and social environment in which all our workforce can achieve their potential and are valued, recognised, supported and celebrated. We are committed to creating a culture where inclusive behaviours become the norm and where diversity is not only accepted but actively celebrated. We want to create an inclusive workplace which reflects the diverse nature of the communities in which we work and recognise that embracing difference contributes positively to a flourishing workforce.

In 2019 we developed and delivered a programme on unconscious bias for our senior leaders across children's and adult services and have continued to have a dialogue about how we provide opportunities for staff and managers to reflect on equality and diversity issues in every part of their practice.

COVID-19 has highlighted existing inequalities in society and Black Lives Matter has focused attention on racial inequalities – nationally and locally. Tackling inequality is at heart of Ealing's priorities but we know we can do more and better as an organisation. After the tragic death of George Floyd on 25th May 2020 several forums were held across the council for staff to raise their concerns about inequality in Ealing Council. Issues mentioned included:

- Senior management are not representative of the community
- Lack of equality of opportunity to develop and progress
- Absence of forums/networks
- Transparency of data regarding protected characteristics (including re-organisations)
- Suitable equality & diversity training and development
- Lack of confidence to have open and honest conversations
- Lack of action after raising issues with line managers about discriminatory practice

As a result of this, numerous actions will take place council-wide and across children's and adults' services to address the concerns and ensure that we achieve culture of equality, diversity and inclusion for our workforce. For the purposes of this strategy we will be focusing on the following areas:

- Providing an opportunity for staff to attend the council-wide training and development programmes devised as a result of feedback from staff
- To develop further development programmes relating to specific issues that affect the children's and adult's services workforce
- Supporting and respond to feedback from adult social care staff equalities group'
- Race and Culture awareness training to be mandatory with a specific focus on anti-racist practice.
- Use employment data to build a rich profile of the workforce's diverse needs. This will underpin the introduction of an annual ethnicity pay audit, backed by any immediate action required.
- Introduction of a reverse mentoring scheme for senior leadership team members to ensure that there is a greater understanding of the issues faced by ethnic minority members of staff.

Priority 4: Developing and Maintaining Partnerships

Partnership working in Children's and Adults is key to the success of most to the projects and processes that we design and deliver to improve services for our residents. We will continue to work closely with our partners in the West London Alliance (WLA), The North West London Partnership (NWLP) and the West London Teaching Partnership (WLSWTP) to provide comprehensive learning and development programmes for our workforce. We will also strengthen our partnerships with Higher Education Institutions, Brunel University, Royal Holloway, the University of West London and Kings College London - the latter to increase the research mindedness of the workforce.

Teaching Partnerships are being encouraged to develop regional evidence-based approaches to workforce planning to ensure employers have the required number of social workers with the appropriate knowledge & skills to meet demand for services. The WLSWTP acknowledges the role of workforce analytics in informing the development of workforce planning solutions; hence partners have undertaken a review of the workforce data to understand the changing nature of the regional labour market. Ealing is working collaboratively with our West London neighbours and partner universities to maintain a steady, manageable supply of high quality newly qualified social workers from higher education institutions and via work-based routes. This local workforce strategy is aligned with the TP regional plan and includes shared objectives, such as supporting more statutory placements for student social workers.

In Children's Services there is a strong working relationship with schools, which will be enhanced through the implementation of the SWiSS¹¹ programme (mentioned earlier in priority 2) that aims to reduce the need for interventions into family life. Adults' services have a good relationship with Health, which is essential for promoting independence of adults who need our care and support and ensuring we share our limited resources across these settings to provide effective care.

In Adults Services we are committed to providing training and development opportunities for the independent sector. We work with several organisations who are contracted by Ealing as well as other spot providers. Training needs are identified through provider forums, the Ealing Safeguarding Children Adults Board and from Skills for Care guidance. Details are also published in the Ealing Market Position Statement. We are and will continue to:

- Offer places to partnership agencies in the PVI sector in Ealing on the Adults' in-house programme.
- Facilitate access to the Care Certificate.
- Send a training team representative to attend the Home Care, Residential and Nursing Home and Learning Disability Provider Forums, set up by our Commissioning team to capture training needs from PVI sector.
- Build our networking links and the quantity of training opportunities we can make available to the PVI sector, via our partnership with Skills for Care.

¹¹ Social workers to work with teachers in schools, DfE, May 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/social-workers-to-work-with-teachers-in-schools>

- Work with the contracts and the commissioning teams in Adults Services to ensure the training and development needs of provider services are being met.
- Provide information on training and development activities on a yearly basis to update the Ealing Market Position statement.

We have strong and embedded borough-wide safeguarding processes and practices, via our partnership arrangements with the Police, Health, Schools, Housing, Early years and corporate safety team, to provide multi-agency safeguarding systems, processes and training. In Children's Services we provide a comprehensive multi-agency safeguarding programme of training for all partners which is jointly reviewed and monitored via six-weekly steering group meetings. In Adults we have recruited to a Safeguarding Business Manager who will be taking this forward together with the Chair of the safeguarding board which sits jointly between to the two services.

APPENDIX I – Summary of our Current Workforce

APPENDIX II – Action Plan

APPENDIX III - Principles Underpinning the Training and Development Programme

- Ensure all learning and development activities support Adults, Children’s and Future Ealing’s strategic aims, values and priorities.
- Prioritise scarce resources to ensure value for money and budgets are maximised.
- Apply agreed professional and quality standards to the design, provision and evaluation of the social care training and development service.
- Continuously improve our training provision and seek partnerships to ensure high quality, effective and efficient costed training is provided.
- Be able to demonstrate the tangible and intangible benefits derived from the investment in learning and development.
- Continue to promote Ealing Council’s identity as a strategic council by building capacity, capability and investment in training and development.
- Maintain fair and transparent policies and procedures which are open to internal and external scrutiny and have been Equality Impact Assessed effectively.
- Provide an efficient and effective training management service to secure appropriate learning and development opportunities for the right people, at the right time, in the right way, to the right standard.
- We commit at an organisational and managerial level to ensuring that all staff are culturally competent and able to work in a non-discriminatory, anti-oppressive and anti-racist way.

APPENDIX IV – Social Workers Career Pathway/Progression